



EVALUATION OF CHILD PROFILE HEALTH PROMOTION MATERIALS

CHILD Profile is the Washington state health promotion system and immunization registry, sponsored by the Washington State Department of Health, for parents of all children from birth to age six. The health promotion system, a tool providing key public health messages mailed to parents statewide, provides parents with information specific to each child's age. The materials contain health, nutrition, safety, behavior and development messages that are fundamental to keeping children healthy. There are seventeen mailings, most of which are tied to the timing of well child visits. By July 1, 2004, the entire series of materials will be sent to all parents statewide. The mailings are currently sent to nearly 80% of Washington State parents of children from birth to age 6.

All materials are available in Spanish. To identify those wanting Spanish materials, all parents statewide are sent a postcard when their child turns three months requesting return of the postcard to begin receiving the materials in Spanish. Additionally, providers, and participating local health jurisdictions and hospitals provide language preference data to CHILD Profile for identification of Spanish needs.

The CHILD Profile evaluation team determined the need for regular evaluation of the health promotion materials to ensure the materials meet CHILD Profile goals to provide parents with relevant, accurate, and up-to-date child health information. The University of Washington, under contract with the Washington State Department of Health, evaluates parent satisfaction with the materials on a regular basis. Satisfaction levels have been reported from two previous parent surveys (1996, 1999). Specifically, the parent surveys measure relevance, usefulness, satisfaction, and potential attitude and behavior changes.

In April 2002, the most recent set of surveys were conducted of parents statewide who are receiving the CHILD Profile materials. Five different surveys were developed to evaluate specific mailings, including: The Introductory Packet, sent to all parents with newborn children or with older children who have just entered the CHILD Profile system via their health care provider; 2 ½ year letter; 3 ½ year letter; 4 ½ year letter; and, 5 ½ year letter. All surveys were translated into Spanish.

A total of 6,740 surveys were mailed statewide. Response rate varied by survey and averaged 47%. Survey results show overall that respondents find materials useful, easy to read, and appropriate. Detailed results from the 2002 surveys include (complete results available late September 2003 upon request):

- Approximately 75% of all respondents said they read the materials regularly; an additional 10% save to read later;

- *Attitude changes:* 67% said the materials answer parenting questions, specifically, growth and development, nutrition, safety, immunizations, and informational tips on caring for their child;
- *Reminders:* Approximately 60% said the letters remind them to get their child immunized and take them to a well-child visit;
- *Behavior changes:* Between 31% - 35% of respondents to the 2 ½ - 5 ½ year surveys said they changed behavior based on the information. For new parents, 41% of all respondents said they would change behavior, based on information from the materials. Highest rankings included crib safety (33%), immunizations (21%) and information about SIDS (17%).
- *Duration of materials:* Over 50% said they think parents should get the materials until children are five or six; an additional 25% said parents should get the materials beyond age six.
- *Usefulness:* Previous surveys reported on comprehension levels (96% - 98% said the materials were easy to understand) and usefulness overall (82%). Current results show respondents find the specific information in the letters useful (details from report available on request). Information on safety, nutrition, keeping teeth healthy, development, play as part of learning, and what children learn from parents were identified as the most useful. Moreover, the majority of respondents (76%-89%) who have received the materials for another child in their household still find the information useful.
- *Introductory packet usefulness:* In a question on the usefulness of the packet, respondents said the specific contents were useful or very useful; 89% said the immunization record holder was useful or very useful, 86% said the immunization record card, 84% said the SIDS pamphlet, 83% said the immunization fact sheet, and 74% said the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies magnet.
- *Additional information:* Also gathered in the survey was data on what other types of information parents would like in the materials. Parents of older children were interested in additional information on sleep, nutrition, developmentally appropriate behavior, schools/preschools, discipline/behavior, growth and development, local resources, and problem solving. New parents are interested in more growth and development information, safety, childcare, information on well-child visits, and on taking care of yourself.
- *Electronic dissemination:* Over 20% of respondents said they would be interested in receiving the information in the mailings electronically. Based on this information, CHILD Profile is in the process of testing electronic dissemination of the materials in addition to the mailed versions.

In addition to this quantitative evaluation, qualitative evaluation, namely focus groups and pretesting of all new materials, is also systematically conducted. In 2002, we conducted a series of statewide focus groups to explore format, content, image and use of the materials. Its purpose was to understand how the materials are perceived and used by parents, and to identify ways to improve the materials. The results support the parent survey findings -- that parents find the information useful, appreciate its conciseness, and that the materials reinforce information they have received from other sources and serve as helpful reminders about their children's health and safety. CHILD Profile is currently utilizing the focus group findings and recommendations on format, content and image to ensure the materials continue to meet the needs of parents.